

Stamford School Readiness Council Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2015

9:30 a.m.

St. Clement Preschool, 535 Fairfield Avenue

Council Members Present:

Deidre Costello Anspach	Director of Nursing and Dental Services, City of Stamford
Karen Feder	Director of Youth Services/ Birth to Three Representative, Abilis
Sheila Glenn	ROSCCO After School Network
Helma Gregorich	Program Manager for Nurturing Families Network, Family Centers
Polly O'Brien Morrow	Program Manager, Corporate Citizenship and Philanthropy
Erica Phillips	Director, All Our Kin
Dr. Polly Rauh	Member, Stamford Public Schools Board of Education
Ellen Reardon	Director, Stamford Museum and Nature Center Preschool
Karen Wenz	Director, First Presbyterian Church Nursery School

Grant Recipients/Advisors/Guests:

Donna Arcuri	School Readiness Liaison, City of Stamford
Karen Brennan	Director, Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative
Martha Hudson	Care Coordinator, Child First
Kimberly Irizarry	College Student, NCC
Marc Jaffe	Executive Director, CLC
Mary Jennings	Director, Early Childhood Development and Intervention, SPS
Kat Johnston	College Student, NCC
Valeria Lopez	School Family Resource Facilitator, SPS
Carol Sargent	Director, State Funded Programs, CLC
Sherry Tarantino	Director, St. Clement Preschool
Nathalie Tocci	Care to Care Coordinator, Family Centers
Jill Tomas	Instructional Coordinator, SPS
Dori Walker	Instructional Coordinator, SPS
Anna Witkowski	Director, Child Day Care Programs CLC

I. Welcome & Introductions

Polly O'Brien Morrow welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. She thanks St. Clements for hosting the meeting and then invited the group to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes from February and March 2015 Meetings

The Council unanimously approved the minutes from the February and March meetings.

III. School Readiness Provider Reports

Provider reports were sent in advance of the meeting and are included here as Attachments A, B, and C. There were no comments or questions on the reports during the meeting.

IV. School Readiness Liaison Update, Donna Arcuri

Donna Arcuri announced that School Readiness RFP applications are due Friday, April 10 and the Quality Enhancement RFP applications are due Friday, April 24. Two independent Review Committees will meet and all applications will be scored based on School Readiness and Quality Enhancement requirements. If a program is unable to meet the 2015 staff qualifications, they may submit an Extension Request to the Office of Early Childhood. The review committees may have questions for each program after they meet. Donna will contact the programs as necessary. The Review Committees will report their recommendations to the Council at the May 7th meeting.

V. Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative Update, Karen Brennan

Karen Brennan reported that the Collaborative participated in All Our Kin's Stamford/Norwalk Family Child Care Resource Fair at UConn Stamford on March 24th with a Spanish speaking interpreter from APPLES, Fanny Degani. In May we have our three scheduled "Family Play and Learn" nights on May 7th, May 14th and May 21st. Karen reminded the Council that the week of April 13th is the Week of the Young Child in Stamford. Karen and Donna have distributed activity placemats to all of the programs throughout Stamford who requested them. Karen B. thanked Karen Wenz for helping set up the display of children's artwork at the Government Center. The kickoff for the Week of the Young Child will be on Monday April 13th at 10:00 a.m. at Government Center where in addition to the artwork we will have a short ceremony with the Mayor, Superintendent and possibly legislators in addition to PLTI alumni. Mary Jennings will be the Master of Ceremony. Karen stated that we will have 60 children from CLC William Pitt on hand to sing and entertain the audience for Music Monday.

VI. CES Monitoring Report - Julie Coakley (CES)

Monitoring is a state requirement for all School Readiness providers. Individual monitoring reports were given to Council members for review prior to the meeting and are attached here as Attachment D. Cooperative Educational Services (CES) is contracted by the Stamford Public Schools to provide monitoring for our School Readiness providers. This is the report for CLC Maple Avenue, CLC Lathan Wider and SPS the SR classroom and is included as Attachment D.

Julie Coakley reported that this is the first year the School Readiness classroom at Rippowam was monitored with the Learning Experience Plan and Implementation Monitoring Tool, but second year of the school's operation. Julie stated this was a very strong report. This classroom has moved right into the CT ELDS and is a language rich environment with much individual attention for the children. Next steps for this classroom are: to increase the number of higher order thinking experiences for children, align work samples collected to align to the CT ELDS to

be used as evidence for growth over time and to be more specific in anecdotal notes. The classroom immediately submitted an action plan to conduct the next steps. Julie felt for a program that is only two years old, they did a wonderful job.

Next Julie reported on the brand new classrooms at CLC Lathan Wider. Julie used a pre-instrument instead of the monitoring tool that is normally used. This tool does not have a rating component. It is used to get a baseline feeling of where the classrooms are in development. Julie stated that they too are doing wonderful job. These classrooms met almost all the criteria at 100%. These classrooms are very engaged with the children and working on the CT ELDS. They were very supportive of learning and emotional needs. Next steps for these classrooms are: look at learning centers and think about planning experiences over time, more experiences and questions at higher levels of Blooms Taxonomy, anecdotal notes need to focus more on what children say and do and finally provide professional development and ongoing support. Julie noted again this program was only open for open a month and monitoring went very smoothly. The connection between the teachers and students was evident in such a short period of time.

The final report was for CLC Maple Ave. Julie reported that the instrument used for this report is different since this site is a Head Start program and they focus on the CLASS instrument. Julie reported that both she and Suzanne Clement are now trained to monitor classrooms using the CLASS instrument. Next steps for this program include: articulate the “learning objective” in each classroom, higher order thinking is also something to work on which includes having children explain their conclusions, engaging children in the brain storming process and in extended conversation around curriculum.

Julie stated that we are lucky to have all of the teachers we have in the SPS School Readiness program. She feels all the teachers in all programs are obviously invested and engaged with the children.

Ellen Reardon wanted to agree with a statement from Julie’s last report in February that she agrees that three teachers in every classroom is a critical piece to the learning experience and as a Council, she would like us to have an opinion on that. Carol Sargent responded that there are some stumbling blocks regarding three teachers in each classroom. Carol explained because of size of some classrooms the number of students varies. Some have as little as 14 children. Financially it would be difficult to have three teachers in a room this small.

Erica Phillips asked about professional development for the community. Julie responded that it is more effective to pull together the teachers that need the same type of professional development. For community impact and professional development surrounding the CT ELDS, Julie suggests as many hands on workshops that we can provide so that the teachers can actually bring something back to the classroom. Julie stated that the new assessment for the CT ELDS will not be out for a couple of years. Therefore advice from the OEC is that if you are using the PAF, continue to use the PAF or whatever assessment you are using.

Karen B. pointed out that the Instructional Coordinators (IC’s) are so invaluable that perhaps we could find more grant funding to employ more IC’s.

VII. Announcements

Donna announced that we are holding two hands on workshops for our private providers on the ELDS. The first will focus on Art to be held on April 28th and the second will focus on Science and will be held on May 11th.

Nathalie announced Care to Care is hosting its annual provider dinner on April 29th. Ellen Swan will be providing a program and discussion surrounding social and emotional health for private and home care providers.

Polly Rauh gave an update on CT's Taskforce on English Language Learners. This survey and discussion was done around the state and was not community specific. Stamford has almost 3000 identified students alone. It is noted that there is a concern due to spotty representation in the early childhood community. Another fact that came out of the survey is that we are missing communication with Haitian community. This is an increasing population in Stamford. In addition to Spanish, we here in Stamford also need to have teachers for our children that speak Creole. Dual language programs are more powerful in the long term for these students. Polly noted that she has seen a shift in the state from isolated ELL programs to a mix of children. Polly suggested that if financing becomes available this is something that the early childhood community should consider.

Marc Jaffe reported that on Saturday April 25th CLC will hold its annual gala. This year will honor Ray Giallongo of First County Bank and First County Bank Foundation and Sharon Robinson daughter of Jackie and Rachel Robinson.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

**The next Council meeting will be held on Thursday, May 7
at 11:00 a.m. at the Ferguson Library.**

Attachment A

School Readiness Report Childcare Learning Centers, Inc.

March 2015

- Program Utilization
 - a. Authorized Capacity – 374 – Full Day; 97 – Part Day; 60- Extended Day= 531
 - b. Slot Utilization – 374-Full Day, 97-Part Day, 60-Extended Day
 - c. Attended – 534
 - d. Ages – 192- 3 year olds, 280 - 4 year olds, 59 - 5 year olds
 - e. Children with disabilities - 18 with LEA- IEP; 2 without LEA-IEP
 - f. Notes and Trends:
- Program Attendance:
 - a. 100%of enrollment
 - b. Notes and trends:
- Staffing
 - Open Positions-
 - a. Cluster A – Assistant Teacher
 - b. Cluster A - Teacher
 - c. Lathon Wider- Head Teacher
 - d. Recruitment – ads on-line, local newspapers, postings at NCC.
- Training:
 - a. Yale/Ruler – March 3
 - b. Staff Dev. Day – March 13 – Diversity Training, LEPs, Med training
 - c. First Aid/CPR – March 24 and 28
- Special Events/Activities:
 - a. Teachers are preparing lesson plans based on the Preschool Curriculum Standards and the individual needs of the children.
 - b. Read Across America – March 2-10 (added two days due to weather cancellations) Cat in the Hat visited, Various stations in Atrium relating to Dr. Seuss books i.e., children went fishing at One Fish ,Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish station, bean bag toss into the Cat's hat, pin the green egg on the ham for Green Eggs and Ham.
 - c. Donna Arcuri monitored program – March 11
 - d. Carol Sargent testified on SB 1044, several teachers submitted written testimony, wages-March 12
 - e. Tours for new prospective parents – March 18
 - f. Carol Sargent and several teachers submitted written testimony on HB 7020, wages and credentialing – March 19

- g. Bookmobile – March 17 and 31
- h. Stamford Museum and Nature Center - “Maple Sugaring” – March 17, 18, and 19
- i. Music and Movement with Fiona Angelov – every Tuesday and Thursday
- j. Parent Advisory Council – March 18

Attachment B

St. Clement Preschool School Readiness Written Report March – 2015

Program Utilization:

- School Day – School Year – 41 Students to date
- Pre – K 3 Class – 15
- Pre – K 4 Class #1-13
- Pre – K 4 Class #2-13
- All 31 SR slots taken.
- Newly registered Pre-K 4 child to start on Monday, April 6th.
- Continuing tours each day for Fall 2015 enrollment
- New enrollment for 2015 – 2016 school year is now up to 27 children.

Attendance:

- 80% attendance. Many children out due to the cold or snowy weather, & children sick with stomach flu.
- SCP had 3 morning delays', 2 early dismissals' and 1 snow closure during the month of March. Any snow day closures taken will be made up at the end of the school year. SCP families will be notified on April 21st with an updated calendar of final day of school.

Staffing:

- We are fully staffed! 3 Head Teacher's, 3 Teacher Assistant's & one After School Program assistant.
- 90% attendance - Staff out with colds, stomach flu or family issues.

Activities & Events:

- SCP celebrated Dr. Seuss week 3/2 – 3/6. Although it was a tough week with weather delays, closings and early dismissals, the staff & families were able to celebrate with literacy, projects and wrapped up the week with a "Green Eggs & Ham Breakfast"!!
- SCP hosted the annual Scholastic Book Fair with week of 3/9-3/13. Overall it was a success with using our Scholastic Book \$\$ to help build our "school library". Families enjoy browsing throughout the week and enjoy purchasing books of the child's choice.
- Due to delays & closures during February, our Dental Hygienist "Mrs. B. visited on 3/12 to teach our children the importance of brushing & flossing. She also spoke about good nutrition and checked each child's teeth for any possible issues.
- Our families provided breakfast items for St. Patrick's Day. Children and families enjoyed the "green bagels" provided for the breakfast!!

Attachment C

Stamford Public Schools School Readiness Classroom Report

March 2015

- **Program Utilization**
 - a. Authorized Capacity: 15 School Day, School Year slots
 - b. Ages: 4 year olds
 - c. Students with disabilities: 1 child with special needs
- **Program Attendance:**
 - a. Illness: Attendance was consistent this month.
 - b. Notes and trends:
- **Staffing:**
 - a. Staffing is in place.
- **Training:**
 - a. Continuing NAEYC training with standards and partnership with Instructional coordinators
 - b. CTEDS- Training with Julie Coakley - Science Inquiry
 - c. Pediatric First Aid/CPR Training
- **Special Events/Activities:**
 - a. Taste of the World Celebration- Understanding our Cultures!
 - b. Spreading Kindness 100 ways- School wide initiative
 - c. Parent Report Card Conferences held- 100% attendance
 - d. Ferguson Library Bookmobile continues to visit weekly
 - e. Students continue to participate in weekly enrichment activities including Cooking, Bartlett Arboretum, Bricks and Motors, Yoga and Animal Embassy

Attachment D

Summary of Data

The School Readiness classroom at Rippowam School was monitored using the *Learning Experience Plan and Implementation Monitoring Tool* for the first time (last year the *ECERS-R* was used to monitor). The monitor analyzed each criterion on the Learning Experience Plan and observed the implementation of the Learning Experience Plan using the *Rubric*. After the observation, the Program Monitor filled out the *Rubric*, noted the strengths and next steps for each criterion and met with the teacher, the APPLES Program Director, the Curriculum Associate in Early Childhood and the Instructional Coordinator to provide immediate feedback to develop a shared understanding of the strengths and areas for growth for the classroom. The Summary is below.

Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
A Daily Schedule with estimated time allotments is posted and implemented.	The daily schedule is included/posted with no time allotments indicated.	The schedule indicates time for learning centers, group experiences, and outdoor experiences.	The schedule clearly indicates substantial time for learning centers, group experiences and outdoor experiences.	The schedule clearly indicates substantial and balanced time for learning centers, whole and small group experiences, daily routines and outdoor experiences. X
Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Learning Centers are clearly indicated in plans and available.	Little evidence of centers.	Some centers evident with minimal planning.	Variety of centers evident with planning documented.	Wide variety of centers evident with detailed planning. X
Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Learning Experiences associated with Preschool Assessment Framework Standards are identified on the plan and implemented in the classroom.	Standard(s) are identified but are not clearly associated to learning experiences.	One or more standards are clearly identified and show connections to learning experiences.	Three standards are clearly identified and experiences are specifically described to align with the standard.	Three standards are clearly identified and show connections to learning experiences. Planned experiences are directly connected to the benchmarks associated with the standard. X

Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Teaching strategies (adult actions) are described and implemented.	Activities listed and no evidence of teaching strategies.	Evidence of teaching strategies planned for one experience for one or two standards.	Evidence of teaching strategies planned for one experience for each of the three standards. Evidence of individualizing for specific children.	Evidence of teaching strategies planned for one experience for each of the three standards. Evidence of individualizing for specific children. Evidence of teaching strategies throughout the day. X
Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Early literacy experiences are described and implemented.	Includes time for Shared Reading and/or Read Aloud.	Includes a daily plan for Shared Reading and/or Read Aloud.	Includes a daily plan for Shared Reading and/or Read Aloud. Support for oral language development.	Evidence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Evidence of individualizing including dual language learners. X
Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Bloom's Taxonomy (higher order thinking) is planned for and implemented.	Little or no evidence of Bloom's taxonomy.	Some evidence of planned higher order thinking questions.	Evidence of planned higher order thinking questions and some experiences. X	Evidence of planned higher order thinking questions and experiences throughout the day.
Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Observation is planned and implemented in order to document and assess children's growth in the standards.	Little or no evidence that observation of children occurs.	Evidence that observation of children occurs.	Evidence that observation and documentation linked to PAF standards occurs on a regular basis. X	Evidence that a system is in place for observation, documentation and the collection of children's work samples related to PAF standards.
Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Family engagement is planned and implemented.	Little or no evidence of planned family engagement	Evidence of planned family-teacher communication.	Evidence of plans to engage families in various ways (ex. -communication -volunteerism -learning at home).	Evidence of engaging families in various ways intentionally linked to <i>PAF</i> standards. X
Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary

Reflection is documented.	Little or no reflections documented.	Reflections are documented X		
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***Monitoring Form is based on the *Learning Experiences Rubric* designed by the CT SDE Early Childhood Consultants.**

Classroom Strengths

- ❖ Learning centers are attractive and engaging; children sustain attention and focus in the centers for 20-25 minutes.
- ❖ The Learning Experience Plan and teacher implementation focus on supporting children's skill development in specific Domains, Strands and Learning Progressions in the ELDS.
- ❖ The classroom is language rich!
- ❖ Strategies to support individual children are planned at benchmark; teachers use strategies throughout the observation to support every child.
- ❖ Children have opportunities to experience literacy (reading, writing, speaking and listening) throughout the observation and throughout the day. Teachers used specific strategies to support dual language learners in literacy.
- ❖ The teachers reach out to partner with families in many different ways, including intentionally linking their communication to children's work in the standards.

Next Steps

- ❖ Plan higher order thinking experiences that require children to analyze, evaluate and create.
- ❖ Collect work samples aligned to the standards, demonstrating growth over time.
- ❖ Be more specific about what children say and do in the anecdotal notes.

*The staff have worked with the Instructional Coordinator to create an Action Plan to implement the next steps.

Classroom Monitoring of the Cycle of Intentional Teaching-2014-2015
Summary of Monitoring School Readiness at Lathon Wider
Rooms A,B and C
Completed by Julie Coakley-4/7/15

Three new School Readiness classrooms opened at Lathon Wider; two in the fall of 2014 and one in January of 2015. The Monitoring tool used is the Classroom Monitoring of the Cycle of Intentional Teaching, a tool that was used at William Pitt prior to the use of the Rubric. The purpose of the tool is to give us a starting point for determining current practices in intentional teaching and next steps for each classroom.

Classroom Monitoring of the Cycle of Intentional Teaching

Planning
Current Learning Experience Plan is posted in the classroom
100% of the classrooms posted Learning Experience Plans and implemented the plans.
Changes to the environment are noted in the Lesson Plan (specify)
100% of the classrooms noted changes to the environment, usually in the form of materials to be added to each center. Materials were observed in use.
Experiences and activities are planned for a variety of learning centers in the Lesson Plan (specify)
100% of the classrooms planned for a variety of learning centers. In general, one experience is planned for each center and experiences tended to be one-time activities.
and linked to ELDS or PAF Performance Standards
100% of the classrooms link both ELDS and PAF standards to the experiences planned.

The Lesson Plan includes teaching strategies for:
large group, (specify)
66% of the classroom plans included teaching strategies for large groups.
small groups (specify)
66% of the classroom plans included teaching strategies for small groups.
and individual children (specify)
66% of the classroom plans included teaching strategies for individual children.
The Lesson Plan reflect experiences and activities at different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (explain)
100% of the classroom plans include experiences at a variety of levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Many experiences are planned at the lower levels of the Taxonomy.

Implementation
The activities and experiences in the Lesson Plan are implemented in the classroom (explain)
100% of the classrooms implemented the activities and experiences planned during the observation.
The teachers engage children with <i>ELDS or PAF</i> Performance Standards in mind
100% of the teachers engaged children in the work of the standards.
The teachers implement planned strategies for
large groups,
66% of the teachers implemented planned strategies for large group.
small groups and
66% of the teachers implemented planned strategies for small group.
individual children
66% of the teachers implemented planned strategies for individual children.

The teachers are using strategies even though they are not a part of the Lesson Plan (explain)
100% of the teachers used strategies to support children throughout the observation. Unplanned strategies observed included: demonstrating, coaching, modeling, physical proximity, translation into primary language, narrating teacher's actions as she does something, providing visual and auditory cues, hand over hand support.
The teachers are providing experiences and activities that are not a part of the Learning Experience Plan (explain)
100% of the teachers provide experiences and activities that are not a part of the Learning Experience Plan. Teachers are responsive to the interests and needs of the children.
There is evidence of the classroom teachers sharing information with families regarding intentional teaching (explain)
100% of the classroom teachers share information with families about intentional teaching in the Family Newsletter.

Assessment
The classroom has a system in place for collecting observations and work samples related to Performance Standards for each child (explain)
100% of the classrooms have an assessment system in place. The system is a loose leaf notebook with a section for each child, using a page for each PAF standard, per child to collect anecdotal notes and photos. In addition, each child has a Portfolio to collect work samples.
The teachers write objective observations related to PAF or ELDS Performance Standards on a regular basis for each child (explain)
100% of the classrooms have begun the process of writing observations related to standards. Observation notes, in some cases, are general, rather than specific descriptions of what the child says and does.
The teachers collect work samples related to Performance Standards or

Creative Curriculum Objectives for each child (explain)
33% of the teachers have begun to collect work samples. The classrooms were open for a little more than one month when the Monitoring took place and children were still being newly enrolled.
The teachers complete an assessment on each child three times a year (specify)
100% of the teachers plan to complete the PAF on line for each child. Because the program opened so late in the year, it is not clear whether the assessment will be completed once or twice.
Child assessment information is used in curriculum planning and implementation (explain)
100%-NOT YET
The teachers use Class Profiles to inform curriculum planning (specify)
100%-NOT YET
Program Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teachers in all three classrooms are engaged with the children in the work of the standards, supportive of their learning and emotional needs and positive in their interactions. ❖ Teachers in all three classrooms are using the new <i>CT Early Learning and Development Standards</i> in their planning. ❖ Learning centers in all three classrooms are well organized, attractive and accessible to the children. Teachers plan for the use of different materials in the centers. ❖ Teachers in all three classrooms use a wide variety of strategies to support ALL children.
Recommendations/Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Plan experiences in the learning centers that could be extended over a two week period to engage children in deeper learning in the

standards.

- ❖ Plan more experiences and questions at higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.
- ❖ Focus on what you see and hear the children doing and saying when you write the anecdotal notes. Be specific so that your notes provide clear evidence of children's skills and knowledge in the standards.
- ❖ Provide professional development and ongoing support for teachers in curriculum development and observation and documentation.

Julie Coakley
C.E.S. Early Childhood Services
March 27, 2015

Stamford School Readiness Maple Avenue Monitoring Report-2015

The focus and format for monitoring the School Readiness classrooms at Maple Avenue changed this year in order to be consistent with the *CLASS* tool the program uses for ongoing program improvement and teacher's professional goal setting. At the conclusion of last year's monitoring, Program Director Imelda D'luc, Education Coordinator Annette Yarber-Crooks, School Readiness Liaison Donna Arcuri and C.E.S. consultants Suzanne Clement and Julie Coakley met to assess the 2013-2014 monitoring process for the program and plan future monitoring. The group worked together to design a monitoring process to support the program's use of a consistent tool and consistent language to describe progress and program improvement efforts. Suzanne and Julie were trained in and attained reliability in the *CLASS* this fall. In February, Julie monitored five classrooms using the *CLASS* tool. She observed for at least two twenty minute periods in each classroom, spent one hour writing up the observations and met with the teacher, and in most cases the Education Coordinator for one hour to provide feedback and have a conversation about the observations.

The CLASS-Classroom Assessment Scoring System

The *CLASS* is an observation instrument used to assess classroom quality in preschool through third-grade classrooms. The *CLASS* dimensions focus solely on interactions between teachers and children in the classroom; materials, the physical environment and safety and use of a specific curriculum are not evaluated.

The *CLASS* is organized into three different domains: Emotional Support; Classroom Organization and Instructional Support.

Emotional Support

Teacher interactions in support of social and emotional functioning are observed in the following dimensions:

- ❖ Positive Climate: The emotional connection, respect and enjoyment demonstrated between teachers and students and among students
- ❖ Negative Climate: The level of expressed negativity such as anger, hostility or aggression exhibited by teachers and/or students in the classroom
- ❖ Teacher Sensitivity: Teachers' awareness of and responsivity to students' academic and emotional concerns

- ❖ **Regard for Student Perspectives:** The degree to which teachers' interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students interests, motivations and point of view

Classroom Organization

Teacher actions to support the organization and management of students' behavior, time and attention in the classroom are observed in the following dimensions:

- ❖ **Behavior Management:** How effectively teachers monitor, prevent and redirect behavior
- ❖ **Productivity:** How well the classroom runs with respect to routines and the degree to which teachers organize activities and directions so that the maximum time can be spent in learning activities
- ❖ **Instructional Learning Formats:** How teachers facilitate activities and provide interesting materials so that students are engaged and learning opportunities are maximized

Instructional Support

Teacher interactions in support of children's cognitive and language development are observed in the following dimensions:

- ❖ **Concept Development:** How teachers use instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills in contrast to a focus on rote instruction
- ❖ **Quality of Feedback:** How teachers extend students' learning through their responses to students' ideas, comments and work
- ❖ **Language Modeling:** The extent to which teachers facilitate and encourage students' language

Scoring

Dimensions are scored on a scale of one through seven. The scores of 1 and 2 are low; the scores of 3, 4 and 5 are middle and the scores of 6 and 7 are high. The program monitor used the low, middle, high designations to rate each classroom, rather than scoring with a number, to be consistent with monitoring practices in School Readiness programs across the city. The monitoring meeting is focused on the conversation with the teacher about strengths and areas of growth or next steps.

Monitoring

At the request of Imelda D'Iuc, the program director, the two domains observed for the monitoring were Classroom Organization and Instructional Support. Every dimension (see above) associated with each domain was observed. 3

Monitoring Results

Classroom Organization

- ❖ Behavior Management-**4 classrooms scored middle range-1 classroom scored high range**
- ❖ Productivity-**5 classrooms scored middle range**
- ❖ Instructional Learning Formats-**5 classrooms scored middle range**

Instructional Support

- ❖ Concept Development-**5 classrooms scored middle range**
- ❖ Quality of Feedback-**5 classrooms scored middle range**
- ❖ Language Modeling-**5 classrooms scored middle range**

Program Strengths-Classroom Organization Domain

Behavior Management Dimension

Teachers had clear expectations for children's behavior. Teachers were proactive; some teachers reviewed rules with children; other teachers acknowledged children working together; other teachers encouraged children to support their friends with specific words ("Say 'good job' to him"). In some classrooms no misbehavior was observed; in others it was redirected quickly; in others the misbehavior was not seen by any teacher. Children played cooperatively in all classrooms.

Productivity Dimension

Teachers maximized learning time by having activities set up and available and allowing children to move from one activity to another without waiting. Most children were familiar with routines (hand washing, snack, bath room) in most classrooms, although there was some wandering during clean up. Announcements over the intercom interrupted one classroom twice in a short period of time.

Dimensions Needing Improvement-Classroom Organization Domain

Instructional Learning Formats Dimension

There was a range of practice in facilitation of activities. Some teachers engaged children through active involvement in the activity and asking questions. Other teachers did not facilitate children's involvement and asked distracting questions (i.e. "What color is this?") All classrooms used a variety of materials and modalities. Student interest in activities is high in most classrooms a lot of the time. There is some wiggling and talking during circle. In most classrooms, in most activities, the learning objectives were not clearly stated. 4

Dimensions Needing Improvement-Instructional Support Domain

Concept Development Dimension

Most of the questions asked by teachers were at the remembering and understanding level of Bloom's Taxonomy and did not require children to analyze or reason. For example, recall questions like, "What letter for butterfly?" or "How many wings does a dragonfly have?" or "What is this?" dominated. Occasionally a question that demanded analysis was asked. For example, "What is similar and what is different about the bees in the dirt table?" There were few opportunities to problem-solve, predict or experiment. In one classroom, children engaged in building did some problem solving about how to make an elevator work. Creating, brainstorming and planning did not occur in most of the classrooms. Some teachers integrated concepts minimally; others not at all. For example, children were asked to relate their feelings on the day of the observation to the color that represented their feelings-a connection to prior knowledge of the RULER approach. There were some connections made to children's real world experiences. For example, one teacher explained how the spider uses his eyes to see just like the child uses his new glasses to see.

Quality of Feedback

Teachers provided some scaffolding in the form of hints and assistance in all classrooms. For example, one teacher told the children, "It sounds like a snake, ssss." Another suggested to a child doing a puzzle, "Try the edges first." Feedback loops or back and forth exchanges between teachers and children were limited in all classrooms. For example, child doing a puzzle said, "I think it goes here." Teacher replied, "Try it." In one classroom, feedback loops were short because the children were sitting in whole group for both twenty minute observations and the teacher was trying to include different children. The use of closed questions did not support feedback loops. There were a few instances in some classrooms of teachers prompting children's thought processes. For example, one teacher held up a picture of an ant eating a grape and asked the children, "Do ants eat the same food we do?" When the children replied, "No," she asked, "Are you sure? Look closely." Another teacher asked, "What is different about your beetle?" Teachers occasionally provided additional information to expand on children's understanding in some, but not all classrooms. For example, one teacher said, "another name for a box is a cube." Encouragement and affirmation of the children's work was usually provide at the completion of a task ("High five," to a child who finds the first letter of his name or "You're doing a really good job," to a child playing at the water table. The encouragement did not necessarily increase children's involvement and persistence.

Language Modeling Dimension

Conversations are brief in most classrooms. A large number of the children in each classroom are dual language learners and there is not necessarily a teacher speaking the child's primary language in the classroom. Exchanges between teachers and children with more than one back 5

and forth were rare. Most of the questions asked were closed questions. There were a few open-ended questions asked. For example, “What do you think would happen if they didn’t have wings?” and “What do you need to make your house strong?” Some teachers used repetition of the child’s words and extension, but most did not. For example, one child said, “I putting sand.” The teacher responded and extended by saying, “Oh, you are putting sand on the ____.” In three classrooms teachers used self or parallel talk by mapping their own or a child’s actions with words. For example, one teacher said, “I am going to help _____. She is having a hard time leaving her mom,” as she got up and walked toward the child. In every classroom the focus for vocabulary was on the “bug” words. One teacher used, “advanced language,” teaching children words like antennae, feelers, entomologist, nectar, habitat, research etc.

Next Steps

Maple Avenue has access to *CLASS* videos to support professional development in the different domains and dimensions. These videos should be used along with specific professional learning experiences and an individual “Action Plan” for each teacher to facilitate teachers’ growth in the following:

- ❖ Understanding and articulating clearly the learning objective for an experience or activity
- ❖ Planning experiences, strategies and questions to engage children in higher order thinking, including problem solving, experimenting, comparing
- ❖ Engaging children in a creative process that includes brainstorming, planning and producing
- ❖ Engaging children in explaining their thinking
- ❖ Engaging children in extended conversations
- ❖ Using open-ended questions effectively
- ❖ Using strategies to support dual language learners

*Although analysis of the Learning Experience Plan was not the focus of this monitoring visit, a quick review of the plan revealed the absence of higher order experiences and questions in the plan itself. Teachers may benefit from professional learning focused on providing meaningful curriculum with multiple experiences that involve children in creating, planning and producing